

# **Remains**

**Janet K. Wallace**

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This story was first published on April 8th, 2022, and was last updated on April 8th, 2022.

FicLab ID: Lrlw8kcc/lpkzblh3/50000E5U

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# Summary

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**title** Remains

**author** Janet K. Wallace

**source** <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/14064585/>

**published** April 8th, 2022

**updated** April 8th, 2022

**words** 2,536

**chapters** 1

**status** Complete

**rating** Fiction T

**tags** Comfort, Complete, Drama, Fanfiction, Final Fantasy IX, Fratley, Freya C., Games, Hurt, Zidane T.

## Description:

In the midst of the destruction, Freya Crescent stares at the remains of her old life. Oneshot.

# 1. Remains

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To live...

I used to think that I had no worthy, that I didn't had to live anymore because nobody would care. It's that same voice again, that tricks you, makes you feel worse than any friend stabbing you at back. No wonder the worst enemy is the one that lies within ourselves. That's why I do not have any plans, I try not to think what will happen after ten years, because, well, it didn't. Missing the details in between, that as well didn't happened yet. You make these things happen, it's your choice. It's what you do that defines you, Freya.

So, here I am.

Staring at these clouds, a sandwich in hands, I have nothing to worry about. I feel fine, honest. Met an old friend at the pub, got invited to another Festival of Hunt, bought a nice ham sandwich... everything's fine. Though, I can't ignore this tension. The whole world holding it's breathe, knowing something that I do not. Something unbearable. I do my best to ignore it, let it go away. If there's a thing no more I need is a reason to go

back home. They're fine without me, aren't they? All these five years, and nothing happened, but still, it feels that something will, no matter what I do. No matter what I did back at Burmecia, someone else will do at my place, like it has been for five years.

Five years... do you know how much five years are for a rat? For a being who's born with likely no expectation of living enough to see the sun outside the rainfall? I should be glad for living all these years. Years... everytime they see me, they think about the rat lady who spent five years of her life in search of her boyfriend. Five years, do they know how much that is? Well, those were both good and bad times. Not only I spent months searching for Sir Fratley, but I also learned a lot about this very world, it's beautiful and ugly side. At these hours, though, it seems the bad one always wins, no matter what I do. Being a Dragoon Knight, someone with a javelin on its back, all I've been doing to keep order was make those close to me look in fear.

I know they do. All of them.

The Dragoon Knight, the burmecian... as if wearing this helmet with hollow eyes isn't horrifying enough.

But yeah, there are those who do not notice these details very much. Like how they do with the clouds filling blue skies. If I could reach any of them by the moment, be able to step and lay above cotton pillows. Instead, I stand beneath a filthy ceiling, and I wonder when Lindblum's sight became so, so... repugnant to see. Only now that I took notice of how I came to be here. The Dragoon, whose jumps remind me of doves taking flight, dancing with the wind. You like to show yourself, but you do not care at the very moment. The moment when your heart jumps together of your legs, the pointy helmet to cut the air unseen, despite the heavy armory that limits your being to this very ground everyone walks.

I mean, if there was no ground, surely you would have freedom, but to live in this world, you need to take away a bit of your freedom. Be a cage in search of a bird ever since you were born.

Well, I'm in great shape for my age, after all.

For my age...

Freya, you are not even that old. From five years to here, you're still young. You've aged a lot, but still young. As for Sir Fratley... I believe he's alive. No way I've been wasting my time to answer a dead man's questions. No way!... Geez, finish your

sandwich. It's what happens when you do not eat enough a day. It's cold, but yeah, what did you expected? See, that's your problem. You expect things to happen the way you envision them to. I didn't expected to see Fratley leaving home, even thought he didn't felt comfortable all time. He had big plans, couldn't stand living in a bubble. So do I, in a sense. To this day, I haven't visited home, but something tells me that I should, against my will.

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Careful with what you wish, child.

No more I am the selfish child of before. No more.

If all my wishes came true, he would be back. What happened to him?...

War gets worse every day. The enemy is confused, kills by chance.

Is that what you call by war, Alexandria? Invading homes of families while they're on their sleep? I see less soldiers, more unknown children, or at least remains of some. It's hard to tell what's crumbled stone over gray skin. Hard to hear inside layers of debris of what used to be a Dragoon statue,



or an aqueduct, anything below clouds that doesn't fall as its rain. Not even the rain can hide the strong smell of blood, or put out the fires inside homes. Years of hard work, reduced to nothing by mere silver swords. Don't forget the Black Mages. Well, forget them. They are just dolls who only follow commands.

Kill. Kill. Kill.

I have a friend who's a doll like these. Not like them very much. He is scared, frightened like a child, and I called it by 'he', 'friend', and he has a name too.

Vivi.

Vivi wants to know why. Just the why. The why dolls like him do what they do? Why he insists to stay at our side? Why there's a good and bad side? Why do we have to kill those who want to kill?... Oh, there's Zidane, too. I won the Festival of Hunt a while ago, but now, that doesn't matter. I don't need to win a tournament to prove how strong I am, or entertain some folks with miserable lives by killing beasts to savour their hunger. Could there be joy in it? Surely you felt something. Prestige, importance, significance, a warrior like you shouldn't be

forgotten. No, I don't want to be erased by a void as I fall asleep.

...And who doesn't?

Quina doesn't care. No, I mean, s/he does. Eat this, do not eat this, simple as that. I wish I had single thoughts like these, without complications. Why is s/he fighting at our side? Because yes. Because I want to enjoy every meal in this world, but there's not much to enjoy at home. The rain makes everything feel dirty instead of clean. Instead of crying to feed the people, the clouds just look sad as they do. I don't even want to remember what we had been through Gizamaluke's Grotto, no I just don't. The strong smell was there, so do the water, the people I don't remember but they did remember me at their final moments. Me, or maybe, the one who holded this coat.

The one sucked by the void.

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— Freya.

I'm home.

—...Freya?

I can't breathe. Dust is too thick.

So much dust, for no ceiling. So many ashes. Many leaves, for no autumn. Clean your foot at entrance, but which? There's no entrance, for a house filled of so many filth. Below the filth, lies some old memories. Good ones. This is a wall, or at least a piece of it. Not a single wall, but the one father used to measure my height. I was taller than all my brothers and sisters. Now I feel like a giant who stepped in an anthill. Was it my fault? My fault...

— We need to go.

I don't wanna go, Zidane. I... I have to pay respect. Respect for the old ones. Respect the King, protect the King, leave everything behind. The King... he is more important. He is more important than you. He is a helpless baby who needs to be taken care of. Oh, please, father, you need help. Father... I saw something red on the floor. It ain't blood, because those who lived here were gone for a long while. Five years, how much five years are. Not even a letter. All that is left now, the coat... shreds of a coat, covered in dust, threw away as if it was nothing. Nothing, but a piece of father.

You've won, Brahne.

You shouldn't have left enough to be contemplated.

You shouldn't. Now this is personal.

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Beatrix.

Why did she sparred us, but not the rest?

The entire palace, once full of noises, is now gathered by corpses and flies.

— Why me?... Why let me live?

I had a chance of defending myself, so do the others with blades.

But the ones holding baskets, selling apples, holding hands, drinking tea, making love... It's part of the moral code of any soldier, warrior, anyone who holds of a weapon: Do not harm those who do not have a way to defend themselves. Do not harm kids, take care of them. Our burmecian kids are born with claws, they know how to use them, so is that the why? Who knows. Trying to rationalize about the whys do not help. All it matters is that you have the hang of it, the first to do something. If you do not, you're weak.

— I... feel... weak.

Even if I refused to lay down there, easily awaiting for my head to be cut, I had my worthy to be finished by a soldier like you, Beatrix. After all, I trained all these years to be defeated. To have a hope of winning, but always lose. In every training, he bested me. But Burmecia alone wasn't enough for Sir Fratley, no it wasn't. To fight and always win, Fratley never once surrendered, not even for the love we had. Love, you say... I wanted to be better than his, be him, but all I did was to appreciate. Keep watching, try to understand the why. Why he seemed better than me, why I liked him if I wasn't at his very position.

...Drown the cricket with a glass of water, then cut its legs. Cut the legs, he won't be a nuisance to your ears... You planned to kill the cricket. You envisioned it. Every detail, coming out of a five year-old head. Father never raised a hand on you, no matter how bad your singing was. No more dinner for you, she said. It was a cricket, why did it bother you so much? Was because he could sing better than you? Sing on your sleep, where you pretend that everything's better at your will? No more a selfish child, no more a selfish child, no

more, no more no more no more  
nomoremoremoremore.

— I'm so tired. I need to go home.

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The bright morning sun can't be seen at Burmecia.

It just need to be felt. However, not many are left to feel the warmth, the cold, or anything. The rain makes every street feel empty. Birds tear clothes apart to build nests. The worms crawl out earth, disturbed by the sight of no life. Someone is alive and with an arm to pull the rope and ring the church bells, as they always do at VI-XII.

Meanwhile, in the Burmecian palace, whose stained glasses reduced to a rainbow path of shards and statues of old warriors torn apart used to offer a beautiful view, Zidane wakes up. Followed of Vivi, and Quina, they look around the empty hallway. A hole in the ceiling, cracks in the walls, it was like staring to a young man become old.

— Where... Where's Freya? Has anyone saw her? — Zidane asked. None of his friends knew where she was. Perhaps...

It didn't took that long for Zidane to find out. For such a huge Kingdom, there was only one place where she could be at the moment.

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In the middle of darkness, burnt wooden piles and crumbled stones, a warrior kneels before the remains of an old life.

—...This is a clay vase I made when I was five. Ugly, isn't it? Wasn't that much important, though, she said otherwise. A comb for the leeches, a sparring pair of pants... See, I had to use these. How I hated wearing brother's clothes. And this, this used to be my flute. Broken or not, I never learned to play it, but father did. That tree over there, outside... Look. that used to be a pear tree I climbed at. I always liked to eat the soft ones. One day, I fell from that tree, broke a leg. The good is that she was there to take care of me. Always there. Here... Mom. She liked to paint, but not be put in a picture. Had to stay on same position for hours and hours. Now seeing it like this, her face in a half...

— Freya...

— Damaged, like the rest. You know how long it took for this house to be finished? How many of

them? It took time, and strong men to finish it. This coat... it belonged to father. He inspired me to become a Knight. I had to be inspired. I used to see him as a noble guard, my hero. He always came home with holes, and mom was there to sew them. My whole hand can pass through this one, see? The holes weren't that huge, not like this. So, Zidane... you came here to talk about the others, didn't you?

— I came here for you. Also, Vivi and Quina are fine.

— Good to know. Oh, look at me. Burmecia is in ruins, it's houses in shambles, childhood friends lying at streets, and I, crying for MY own losses. That's very foolish of me. Like, I shouldn't be bothering you with my dumb problems...

— Your problems aren't dumb. I repeat, they aren't. This is a terrible loss, too.

— And how terrible, Zidane. This is the place I was born. It's part not only of my story, but other's stories too. I... I didn't cry at the moment. It didn't matter. I had more important things to do, my people were in danger, but now... how it hurts.

— I believe that we should cry for our losses, Freya. Otherwise, the pain never goes away. And it



needs to go. We have more important things to deal with.

— Right. Let's get out here.

The first time I met Zidane, thought the Knight, he stole my wallet. Now he's here to offer me something I need. I mean, we both need. A solid foundation, for a house built in sand.

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